

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6313

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
State Government, Tribal Affairs & Elections, February 3, 2026

Title: An act relating to creating the capitol centennial stewardship account and authorizing members of the Legislature and statewide elected officials to solicit gifts, grants, and donations to the account.

Brief Description: Creating the capitol centennial stewardship account and authorizing members of the Legislature and statewide elected officials to solicit gifts, grants, and donations to the account.

Sponsors: Senators Liias, Wilson, J. and Nobles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State Government, Tribal Affairs & Elections: 1/30/26, 2/03/26 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Capitol Centennial Stewardship Account, to be used for remodeling and repairs to the state capitol public facilities, interpretive and educational activities, and improvements to activities to enhance public participation in state government.
- Authorizes statewide elected officials, including members of the Legislature, to solicit gifts, grants, or donations to the account.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL AFFAIRS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Valdez, Chair; Kauffman, Vice Chair; Wilson, J., Ranking Member; Fortunato, Hasegawa, McCune and Riccelli.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff: Danielle Creech (786-7412)

Background: Washington State Capitol Public and Historic Facilities. The Washington State Legislative Building serves as a working governmental center, housing the State Legislature and offices for the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, and State Treasurer. In 1911, the State Capitol Commission held an architectural competition, and selected a design by New York Architects Walter Wilder and Harry White. In 1922, construction began on the Legislative building and six years later, in 1928, the Legislative Building was completed, becoming the seat of the Washington State government.

In addition to the Legislative Building, the Washington State Capitol public and historic facilities include:

- the public spaces and historic interior and exterior elements of the visitor center, the Governor's mansion, the John L. O'Brien building, the Cherberg building, the Newhouse building, the Pritchard building, the temple of justice, the insurance building, the Dolliver building, capitol court, and the old capitol buildings including historic state-owned furnishings and works of art commissioned for, or original to, these buildings; and
- the east, west, and north capitol campus grounds, Sylvester park, Heritage park, Marathon park, Centennial park, Capitol Lake, the interpretive center, and Deschutes parkway.

Ethics in Public Service. The Ethics in Public Service Act (Ethics Act) addresses conflicts of interest, improper use of state resources, gifts, and compensation for outside activities. It prohibits state officers and state employees from using their public employment for personal gain or private advantage, or to provide special privileges or exemptions for anyone else unless required to perform duties within the scope of their employment. The Ethics Act applies to all three branches of government: executive, judicial, and legislative. Each branch has a single board responsible for enforcing the law with respect to employees in that branch. The three boards are the Executive Ethics Board, the Commission on Judicial Conduct, and the Legislative Ethics Board.

The Ethics Act also places limitations on the solicitation and receipt of gifts. A gift is anything of economic value for which no consideration is given. A gift does not include items as specified under statute, such as:

- items from family members or friends where it is clear beyond a reasonable doubt that the gift was not made to influence the recipient;
- items that are customary and not related to the recipient's official duties;
- items exchanged among employees at social events;
- payments by a governmental or nongovernmental entity incurred in connection with a speech, presentation, appearance, or trade mission made in an official capacity;
- payments for enrollment and course fees, including travel expenses, for attending seminars and educational programs sponsored by a bona fide governmental or nonprofit professional, educational, trade, or charitable association or institution; and

- discounts available to an individual as a member of an employee group, occupation, or similar broad-based group.

State officers and state employees may not receive or solicit anything of economic value as a gift, gratuity, or favor from any person if it could reasonably be expected that the gift, gratuity, or favor would influence the vote, action, or judgment of the officer or employee, or be considered a reward for action or inaction. As a general rule, state officers and state employees are also prohibited from accepting gifts with an aggregate value in excess of \$100 from a single source in a calendar year or a single gift from multiple sources with a value in excess of \$100. A single gift includes any event, item, or group of items used in conjunction with each other or any trip.

Exemptions to the general rule are provided in statute and are items presumed to not influence the recipient. Examples include the following:

- unsolicited flowers;
- unsolicited promotional items;
- unsolicited tokens or awards of appreciation;
- food and beverage consumption at a hosted reception related to official duties;
- admission to events, including food and beverages, sponsored by a civic, charitable, governmental, or community organization; and
- gifts solicited on behalf of a national legislative association or the annual conference of the National Association of State Treasurers, for the purpose of hosting an official conference within the state.

Time Limit for State Officials to Solicit or Accept Contributions. Beginning 30 days before a regular legislative session convenes and continuing through the date of final adjournment, state officials are prohibited from soliciting or accepting contributions to a public office fund, a candidate or authorized committee, or to retire a campaign debt. There is an exception for the Washington State legacy project, which authorizes the Secretary of State to solicit and accept gifts, grants, conveyances, bequests, and devises of real or personal property.

Summary of Bill: The Capitol Centennial Stewardship Account is created. Statewide elected officials, including members of the Legislature, may solicit gifts, grants, or donations to the account. Money from the account may only be spent after appropriation, for the following purposes:

- remodeling and repairs to the state capitol public and historic facilities;
- interpretive and educational activities; and
- improvements and activities to enhance public participation in state government.

When soliciting gifts, grants, or donations to the account, statewide elected officials and members of the Legislature are presumed not to be in violation of the solicitation and receipt of gift provisions of the Ethics Act. The Capitol Centennial Stewardship Account and the exemption to the Ethics Act for solicitation of gifts, grants, and donations expire on

June 30th, 2033. Any funds remaining in the account on July 1st, 2033, will be transferred to the Capitol Furnishings Preservation Committee Account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Our capitol campus is an incredible place and our beautiful Capitol building is turning 100 in 2028. This is a wonderful opportunity to improve it. This idea came from the state of Oklahoma, which built its capitol building more than 100 years ago, but didn't include a dome. Then, 75 years later, they created a public-private partnership to raise money and build a dome. So, perhaps Washington can raise some money to match its public investments to spruce up the capitol and make it even better for the next 100 years.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Marko Liias, Prime Sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.